

What is the . . .

# State Historical Building Code?

## Intent \_\_\_\_\_

*The intent of the State Historical Building Code (SHBC) is to protect California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction problems inherent in historic buildings and offering an alternative code to deal with these problems. The SHBC provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or relocation of structures designated as historic buildings. SHBC regulations are intended to facilitate restoration or accommodate change of occupancy so as to preserve a historic structure's original or restored architectural elements and features. While the code provides for a cost-effective approach to preservation, it also provides for occupant safety, encourages energy conservation and facilitates access for people with disabilities.*

## Background \_\_\_\_\_

*In 1975, the State of California adopted into law Senate Bill 927, which created the authority for the SHBC and for an advisory board to prepare regulations to implement the code. The SHBC is unique among state regulations. The authority of this document required that state agencies responsible for building construction disciplines. After years of careful deliberation, the comprehensive SHBC regulations were adopted in August and October, 1979.*

## Relationship To Other Codes \_\_\_\_\_

*There are four model performance codes generally utilized in the United States. The Uniform Building Code (UBC), published by the International Conference of Building Officials, is utilized by most California*

*jurisdictions. In 1975 and 1978 the UBC was amended to include a new provision relating to historic structures. 1979 UBC, Section 104(f), encourages code enforcement officials to consider retaining historic and architectural integrity while providing for an acceptable level of life safety. The SHBC goes beyond UBC, Section 194(f), to provide a specific and comprehensive set of alternative regulations. Local jurisdictions generally utilize a combination of state law, state regulations, and the UBC for enforcement purposes. Since Senate Bill 2321 in 1984, local enforcing authorities, such as building officials and fire enforcement officers, are to use the SHBC, with the existing code, when dealing with historic structures. Under the SHBC officials are provided the latitude necessary to exercise the judgment required to retain the viability of historic resources.*

## SHBC Defined \_\_\_\_\_

*The SHBC is Part 8 of Title 24 (State Building Standards Code). Title 24 contains all state agency regulations relating to building construction. The SHBC may be obtained as an excerpt from Title 24 as a single. State law requires that all jurisdictions have a copy of Title 24. Sections of the SHBC deal with space and occupancy, structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, fire protection, access for people with disabilities, and many other sub-topics.*

## How To Use SHBC \_\_\_\_\_

*The SHBC, applies to all qualified historic structures, districts and sites. To be qualified, designation must come from federal, state or local authority and includes structures listed on the following:*

- **National Register of Historic Places**
- **California Register of Historic Resources**
- **California Registered State Historic Landmarks**
- **Points of Historic Interest**

- **State recorded and evaluated local inventories**
- **City or county inventories of historic or architecturally significant sites, landmarks or districts.**

*Title 24, Part 8, the State Historical Building Code, is the only building code in California appropriate to historic structures, districts and sites. It mandates that reasonable alternatives be sought and adopted where historic fabric or historic perceptions are threatened by the requirements of standard code. Enforcement rest with local jurisdictions subject to appeal as outlined below.*

## The Historical Building Safety Board \_\_\_\_\_

*The SHBC enabling legislation (Health and Safety Code, Part 2.7, Sections 18950, et seq.) has established State Historical Building Safety Board (SHBSB) in the office of the State Architect.*

*The Board, composed of representatives of the design and construction industry, state agencies and local governments, is authorized to act as a consultant on the SHBC to state and local agencies. Chief among the Board's duties are the power to advise, consult with state and local agencies on matters of administration and enforcement of the code and hear appeals. Regulatory agencies may consult the Board for advice and counsel for specific problem cases. The Board, functioning in this capacity, has responded to many jurisdictions throughout the state with reviews of specific issues. Individual property owners may appeal directly to the Board under certain conditions; however, typically, they should first exhaust the local appeals process and then they should work with local officials who in turn can arrange for appeals or requests for advice from the Board concerning specific code compliance problems. Fees will be collected to pay for state costs.*

## Examples Of SHBC Use

*Over the years, countless historic resources throughout California have been restored, reconstructed or rehabilitated, using the SHBC. They run the entire spectrum – from farmyard buildings to homes to commercial, educational, religious and civic buildings; and they include many of the major Landmarks of California’s historic and architectural legacy. The application of this Code has facilitated the revitalization efforts of many California cities, and has been particularly successful in the preservation of the “Old Town” sectors of communities. Federal officials, encouraged by the government to utilize applicable local codes, have consulted with the SHBSB and SHBC intent for construction a Camp Pendelton and Port Hueneme. The California Department of Parks and Recreation has utilized the SHBC for restoration at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park, for selected structures at Fort Ross in Sonoma County, at San Diego Old Town and in Old Sacramento. Additionally, the SHBSB has issued recommendations to assist jurisdictions as to the applicability of the SHBC to restoration of their historic resources. Aspects of the SHBC have been utilized in other states and countries including Washington, Oregon, Nevada, West Virginia, Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.*

## Additional Information

*Copies of the SHBC may be obtained from:*

### **STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING SAFETY BOARD**

1130 K Street, Suite 101  
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Please enclose a check made payable to the **State Historical Building Safety Board** for \$8.00.*

*For more information, contact:*

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